

live up to the fullest of their God-given potential. I now know more strongly than I ever had that it is also wrong to believe for a moment that we can ever become all we ought to be unless we do it together.

And so I say to you, I have tried to be there for you. I have loved the opportunity to be your President. I am grateful beyond words for the chance you gave me in New Hampshire when everybody who was an expert said it was over. I am grateful. But I do not want you to reelect me based on what we have done, or even based on your personal feelings. I want

you to do it because the only way you and your children and your community and your State and your country are going to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow is if we do it together, together 'til the last dog dies.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the gymnasium at Rochester Community Center. In his remarks, he referred to Harvey E. Bernier, Jr., mayor, and Sandra Keanes, deputy mayor; Lincoln Soldati, county attorney, and George Maglaris, county commissioner, Strafford County.

Remarks to the Community in Keene, New Hampshire February 17, 1996

Thank you. Thank you for waiting in the cold. I waited on the runway for 2 hours this morning in Washington for the weather to clear so that I could come, and I was hoping you would wait for me.

Mayor Russell, thank you for those wonderful remarks about your beloved city. Senator Blaisdell, thank you for your support and your statement and your service. And Jennifer Durling, thank you for reminding us all what this election is all about: you and people like you, your future, and your country's future. Thank you for doing such a good job. Let's give her another hand. *[Applause]*

I am delighted to be back in Keene. I thank the high school band and the choir for doing so well today. I was in the band in high school; I can tell you they are freezing to death over there. *[Laughter]* It's not easy to play the national anthem on a warm day, and they did it on a cold day. Let's give them another hand; they were great. *[Applause]*

You know, I know the movie "Jumanji" was filmed here. And I know one of the biggest scenes was an elephant stampede right up this street. And I decided I'd better get up here before it's too late and we had another elephant stampede. *[Laughter]*

I have such wonderful memories of this community. I was last here in 1994 at the Markem Company, but all of you know I came many times in 1992. And the first time I had an inkling that we might actually go on to victory

was the night I had one of my town meetings in Keene, before they were the thing to do. And we rented a hall, or got one, anyway, that was supposed to be big enough for 150 people, and everybody was hoping we'd make the room look almost full. And over 400 people showed up that night. Some of you were there, and I thank you. You gave me heart then to go on, and I thank you for being here now.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to the people of Keene for being so good to Hillary when she was here recently at her rally. On my desk at the White House I've got one of those buttons that says "I'm Keene on Hillary." And since I am, it's only appropriate for me to have it there.

My fellow Americans, you all know that New Hampshire gave me the chance to become President of the United States. And even more important, in all the many visits I had here in 1992—and I just counted before I came up—there were 75 separate scheduled events in New Hampshire between January 1st and election day in 1992. You taught me a lot about America, about America's dreams and challenges, America's hopes, and America's concerns. And because you did in this town square, in those rooms, and the town meetings, you helped me to do my job better. So before I say anything else, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity I've had these last 3 years to work for you. I thank you.

In 1992, I came here with a straightforward vision for our country. I wanted us to go into the 21st century with every American who was willing to work, having a chance to live the American dream. I wanted us to go into the 21st century together, not divided, and the leader of the world for peace and freedom.

I believed then and I believe now there is a simple strategy. We have to create opportunity. We have to insist on responsibility. And we have to believe in our common destiny. We have to go forward together. I am tired of seeing this country divided for short-term political gain. We are strong when we are together. We are never defeated when we are together.

When I came here to New Hampshire, I said I had an economic strategy for America. If you would vote for me, we would cut the deficit in half, institute an investment plan that would create 8 million new jobs, open the doors of trade to American goods and services. In the last 3 years, we have cut the deficit in half. I have another year, but we have almost 8 million jobs already. The unemployment rate today in New Hampshire is less than half what it was in 1992. And for the first time in a long time, our exports to other countries are growing faster than their imports here. America is on the move.

I said if you will elect me I will try my best to reassert the values that made this country great: to strengthen our families, to be tougher on crime, to reform welfare to value family and work, and to try to bring us together. And in the last 3 years, the crime rate is down, the welfare rolls are down, the food stamp rolls are down, the poverty rate is down, the teen pregnancy rate is down. America is on the move.

And I am so grateful that our country has been able to be a force for peace and freedom around the world. More than anything else, I am grateful that now there is not a single nuclear weapon pointed at any American citizen. I am grateful for the role we have played for peace, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Haiti, and yes, I am grateful for the brave Americans who are defending peace in Bosnia today. And I know you're all proud of them as well.

But what I have to say today is you're entitled to a complete report, because you know in your bones this is an unusual time. How could we have 8 million new jobs, how could we have in New Hampshire an unemployment rate below

4 percent and people still feel uncertain about their present and their future? Because half or more of our people are still working harder without a raise. Because a lot of companies are downsizing and laying people off. Their stock prices go down, but their people go out. What happens to them?

We all know that there are still profound social problems in our country that must be addressed. And we know this is still a dangerous world, as we have been visited in the last 3 years with terrorism in our own country, and we've seen it in Japan and in other countries as well. We've seen that there are enemies to peace everywhere when the great Israeli Prime Minister is murdered and madness returned when the building was blown up in England, trying to shatter the peace in Northern Ireland. Everywhere in the world we are safer than we were, but we are not free of difficulty.

Why is this? I want you to understand that very clearly. I believe that we are having these changes and these perplexing times with all the good things happening but challenges remaining, because this is the time of the most profound change our country has experienced in 100 years. Not since we moved from being primarily a rural people to people who live mostly in towns and cities, when we moved from being primarily a people who made our living on farms to being a people who made a living mostly on factories and the activity that created, have we been through such change.

We are now going into an economy dominated by information and technology, where work is ever more mind and less muscle. We are going into a world where global markets for goods and services and money forced us all to compete in ways we never had to compete before. And wherever there is a great uprooting, there are lots of opportunities that we can celebrate. Just for example, in the last 3 years, there have been more new jobs created by businesses owned by women alone than have been laid off by the Fortune 500.

But there are those who do well and those who are not doing so well, who are not positioned yet to win in this new age of possibility. I believe with all my heart that the young people in this audience today will have an era of greater possibility to live out their own dreams than any generation of Americans has ever enjoyed if we meet the challenges of the present and if we do it in the right way.

And so I've come here today to ask for your support, not because of the warm personal feelings I feel, not because of the many friends I have in this audience, not even because of the achievements of this administration, but because of the challenges that lie ahead and because we dare not face those challenges unless we are willing to face them with vision and to face them together. That is why I seek your support.

Look at the discussion in Washington over balancing the budget. I'm for balancing the budget. When I showed up in Washington, the debt of this country had been quadrupled in 12 years. We cut it in half in 3 years, just like I told you we would in 1992. And we have to finish the job, but we have to do it in a way that is consistent with our values and consistent with our interests. That means we must do it in a way that honors our obligations to our parents, to our children, to our environment, and to our future.

We do not need to eliminate the AmeriCorps program to balance the budget, and it would be wrong to do so. We do not need to cut environmental protection by 30 percent, and it would be wrong to do so. We do not need to deprive good, hardworking families who have children with disabilities of the support that Medicaid gives them, and it would be wrong to do so. And we do not need to change the Medicare program that has given us senior citizens with the highest life expectancy of any senior citizens in the entire world and break that down. It is not necessary to balance the budget, and we should not do so.

Now, let me tell you what I think we will do. I believe we will keep that deficit coming down. I believe there's a national consensus for balancing the budget. And I want you to look ahead as I asked in the State of Union Address at the challenges of the future and to ask what you should do and what I should do. That is what this election is all about. Don't let anybody kid you about anything else. Elections for President are still about you. They're about you and your family and your dreams and your challenges and your future. And don't you ever let anybody take an election away from you. Make it about your future.

Our first challenge is to strengthen our families and to help all children recover their childhood. That's what the Family and Medical Leave Act was all about. That's what providing

more opportunities for Head Start is all about. Yes, most of it has to be done by people in their individual families. But the rest of us have a responsibility, too. I am proud of the fact that the Vice President and I insisted on the inclusion of the V-chip in the telecommunications law to give parents the right to decide whether their children watch hours and hours and hours of mindless, destructive violence on television for years and years and years.

We have got to provide all Americans the opportunities that Jennifer spoke about. We live in an age where education matters more than ever before. Just last week there was a new study saying that the difference 15 years ago between the earnings of high school graduates and college graduates was about 20 percent, and now it's 80 percent. I believe that we have an obligation to open the doors of college education to every person in America who wants to go.

We should increase the Pell grant program, not reduce it. We should maintain a direct college loan program that gives young people the chance to borrow the money they need to go college and pay it back as a percentage of their income so they will never be discouraged from borrowing that money and going on to college. And if we are to have a tax cut, the best tax cut we could give America is a deduction for the cost of college tuition for every family.

We have to meet a challenge today that won't wait for tomorrow to help every American family willing to work for it achieve a greater measure of economic security. If we're going to see people changing jobs more and more, if we want to keep the dynamism of this economy and still support families who work and want to raise their children, there are a few things we have to do.

Number one, we ought to make it possible—if we can't have health insurance for everybody, at least everybody ought to have access to it. You shouldn't lose your insurance when you change jobs. You shouldn't lose your insurance because somebody in your family gets sick. There is a bill before the Senate today that has almost 50 Republican and Democratic cosponsors. It has been voted out of committee unanimously, but the vested interests do not want it voted on on the floor. We should say to the United States Senate: Pass that bill; send it to the House. Pass it, and send it to the President. America deserves it.

We should guarantee the integrity of the pension systems in America. We dare not go back to the time when companies were allowed to raid their workers' pensions for other short-term gains. And we ought to make it easier for small-business people, like the people who work up and down this street, to take out a pension for themselves and their employees. Less costly, more secure; we have got to do that.

And finally, when people lose their jobs, instead of having to go through this array of programs to find out whether they qualify for training, I propose a "GI bill" for America's workers. Collapse all the programs, put the money in the bank, and give every unemployed worker a voucher. Let the worker decide where to get the training. Cut the bureaucracy, increase the training, put people back to work at higher wages, that's what we need to do here.

And let me say one other thing. To me, among the greatest heroes in this country are the people who work 40 hours a week and do their best to raise their kids and only make the minimum wage. If we do not raise the minimum wage, this year it will drop to a 40-year low in terms of what it will buy. There is always a lot of talk in Washington about family values. It's hard to raise a family on \$4.25 an hour. Let's raise the minimum wage.

We have got to take our streets back from crime. I am glad the crime rate has gone down, but we all know it's too high. You know when we'll know this problem is whipped? When you turn on the television news and you see the report of a crime and you are surprised. We have got to make crime the exception, not the rule in America again. We must not repeal the crime bill's requirement to put 100,000 police on our streets. And we dare not go back on the other provisions of the crime bill.

I know here in New Hampshire where, like my native State of Arkansas, there are a lot of people who love to hunt. When we passed the ban on assault weapons, when we passed the Brady bill, there were hunters who were frightened into opposing our policies, who were told that their guns were going to be taken away. Well, we just had a great duck season in Arkansas and a great deer season in New Hampshire, and not a single hunter lost their guns. They were not told the truth. But I'll tell you who did lose their guns. Over 40,000 criminals could not buy guns because of the Brady bill. We are not going to repeal it.

We must meet the challenge of keeping our environment clean and safe and even better for the next generation. We must discard this crazy notion that the only way we can grow the economy is to destroy the environment. It is not true. We can grow the economy by preserving the environment. That used to be a bipartisan commitment in America, and if you vote for Bill Clinton and Al Gore, the environmental Vice President, you will send a message that will make the environment a bipartisan commitment of America again.

Even in this time when it is tempting to say we have no challenges beyond our borders, I ask you to remember that this great country of ours is looked to all across the world to stand up for decency and peace and freedom. I ask you to understand that we have certain responsibilities because no other nation in the world can do the things we are called upon to do.

I have not sought to make America the world's policeman, but I have not permitted America to withdraw from the world. Where we can make a difference and where it is consistent with our values and our interests, we cannot be policemen, we cannot withdraw, but we can be the world's greatest peacemaker. And that is exactly what we are trying to do today.

These are all challenges that begin with you but involve your Government in a partnership. But there is another challenge we must meet that begins with us and involves you in a partnership. Here in this square of Keene, let me say our seventh great challenge is to make our democracy work again, to give you a Government that costs less and works better, and demands and deserves your trust and your confidence and your participation at election time.

Let me say that just a few months ago I was in Claremont with Speaker Gingrich, and we shook hands on a commitment to try to reform the political system when we were asked by a man who came down to be with me here today, named Frank McConnell. Frank, where are you? Where's Frank? There he is. He is the guy that asked Newt Gingrich and Bill Clinton to join together to clean up the political system, to pass lobby reform and campaign finance reform. Let's give him a hand. *[Applause]*

Well, we did half of it. We passed a very good lobby reform bill, and believe me, the lobbyists are flooding the registration offices. They are getting this information for the first time

on the people they are working for, how much money they're spending, and what they're trying to get done. It's a good law, and I'm proud we did it. And I compliment the Republicans and the Democrats for doing it. But we need to finish the job.

Two distinguished United States Senators—a Republican from Arizona, John McCain, and a Democrat from Wisconsin, Russ Feingold—who disagree on a lot of things but understand that the health of our democracy must be put ahead of partisan politics, have sponsored a campaign finance reform bill. And we ought to pass it, and pass it now, because of Frank and because of you.

This bill includes the things I talked to you about in 1992. It limits spending. It curbs the influence of PAC's and lobbyists. It ends the soft money system. Most important of all, it would recreate the kind of town meetings that New Hampshire made famous, because it would give the candidates free air time. No more negative ads dominating politics but open air time and honest discussions of the issues. We need campaign finance reform, and we need it now.

But let me tell you something else we need; we need you. We need you. I want you to go out Tuesday night. You say, well—or Tuesday in the daytime—and vote. You say, "You don't have an opponent, Mr. President." Oh, yes I do. Oh, yes I do, and so do you. Our opponent is cynicism. It is negativism. It is apathy. It is division. It is short-term gain instead of the long-term interest of the country. Those are our opponents.

Remember, when we're united we never lose; when we're divided we defeat ourselves. Cynicism is a cheap cover and a poor excuse for inaction by the American citizens. Don't tell me your vote doesn't make a difference. It does. It does. If you voted for Bill Clinton and Al Gore 4 years ago, you got the family and medical leave law, you got national service, you got a better college loan program, you got more

kids in Head Start, you got a halving of the deficit, you got policies that contributed to the growth of jobs in America. You did make a difference, and it will make a difference.

You dare not permit the American people, your friends and neighbors, who would never think of coming out here on a cold day and standing here like you are, fall victim to this kind of skepticism and cynicism. It has no place in America.

Let me tell you, I know people say the Government would mess up a one-car parade and nothing good ever happens, but I just gave you a list of things good that happened. And let me tell you something else. In his new book, my friend James Carville points out something that every American should know. In the last 30 years, we have spent one-half of your tax money on just three things: defense, Social Security, and Medicare.

Now, what did you get for it? We won the cold war. There are no missiles pointed at America's children. The elderly poverty rate has been cut in half, and if you live to be 65, senior citizens in America have the highest life expectancy of any group of seniors in the world. I think we got our money's worth. We can make a difference when we work together and when we determine to do things. If we meet the challenges of the future the way we met those three challenges, this country's best days are ahead of us.

You can do it. Go Tuesday. Stand up for your country. Fight for your future, and determine that we are going to do this together.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in the Keene central square. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Pat Russell; Clesson Blaisedell, State senator; and Jennifer Durling, student body president, Keene High School; and Yitzhak Rabin, former Prime Minister of Israel.

Remarks to the Community in Manchester, New Hampshire February 17, 1996

The President. Thank you so much. Didn't Jason Sabatino do a great job? And thank you,

Donna Soucy. And to New Hampshire College Board Chair Bob Morine, and all the people